

DISSEMINATED BY MERCURY PUBLIC AFFAIRS, A REGISTERED FOREIGN AGENT, ON BEHALF OF THE People's Progressive Party (PPP) of Guyana. MORE INFORMATION IS ON FILE WITH THE DEPT. OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, D.C.



Official PPP & Joint Political Party Statements

PPP Press Statement

April 15, 2020

The People's Progressive Party/Civic is compelled to respond to a preposterous document titled "DOSSIER Guyana Elections 2020", bearing the insignia of the APNU + AFC on its face which was prepared by a Michael Gran ger, and sent, via email, to Mr. Joseph Albertini, a principal of a US company called JJ&B LLC.

This "sanction-busting" company has been hired by the Government of Guyana, using public funds, to produce and disseminate an utterly erroneous narrative of what transpired in relation to the March 2, 2020, General and Regional Elections. All the accredited International and Local Observers (including the Organisation of America States (OAS), European Union (EU), the Commonwealth, the Carter Centre, Caricom, Amcham, the local Private Sector Commission, and the Guyana Bar Association), the Diplomatic Community, the Governments of the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Caribbean Community and the United Nations – all issued reports and public statements condemning the naked and vulgar attempts by the APNU/AFC, acting in collaboration with the Guyana Elections Commission, to declare false results for Region #4, the most populous of the ten electoral districts.

Several individual governments and international organisations have publicly stated that any government sworn in on the basis of these results which lack credibility, will not be recognized as a legitimate Government and would face sanctions.

The Chief Justice of the country also delivered a written judgment in litigation filed on behalf of the PPP/C, declaring the tabulation of the said Region 4 results, as fraudulent and illegal and directed that those results be tabulated in accordance with law. The relevant elections officer again refused to comply with the law and the Chief Justice's Orders and declared fraudulent results a second time. The Elections Commission eventually but reluctantly, in the end, was forced to accept that these results were fraudulent and have unanimously decided to ignore these results and have a recount of the ballots done. Currently, the modalities for this recount are being agonizingly worked.

Despite the world knowing the uncomplicated truth about the rank fraud which permeated the declaration of the elections results for region 4, and in this period when our Nation is gripped with combatting the Covid-19 virus and the Government continuously pleading a lack of resources to confront this deadly dilemma, the Ministry of the Presidency is able to fork out some US\$72,000 per month, to pay this lobbying firm and individuals to spread absolutely misleading information on behalf of the APNU/AFC, so that they can continue to hold on to power illegally and in defiance of the Constitution and every democratic principle known to the

free world. The use of public funds to pay for the promotion of a party brief is not only in violation of the Procurement Act, but constitutes a fraud under the ordinary criminal laws of the country. The retained USA firm and its principals, who assisted in the preparation of this APNU/AFC Dossier may, therefore, be guilty of fraudulently misrepresenting to the USA Government that their client is the Government of Guyana when in fact, it is a political party.

This firm may now have not only implicated itself in a conspiracy to disseminate false information to US lawmakers but also may be implicated in a criminal enterprise to misappropriate public funds.

This document is nothing but a tissue of lies which descends to such levels as peddling and promoting ethnic, religious and racial hostilities. This is the dangerous extent to which these political tyrants are prepared to travel, so that they can continue to squat in government.

We comprehensively reject this diatribe and we are in the process of preparing a detailed response, not because the dishonest Dossier is worthy of it but only to set the public record straight.

What other are saying about the election:

Official Statements

Statement of the Commonwealth Observer Group for the 2 March 2020 Guyana Elections April 16, 2020

The Commonwealth Observer Group accredited for the 2 March 2020 General and Regional Elections notes the 15 April 2020 statement of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) indicating that the Commission has decided to conduct a national recount of all ballots cast (Regions 1-10).

It is expected GECOM will ensure that a general final count is undertaken and concluded in strict accordance with the relevant provisions of the Guyana Representation of People's Act (RoPA).

Further, it is imperative GECOM ensures that this is done in a credible, transparent and timely manner, bearing in mind that the people of Guyana have now waited an unconscionable 45 days to bring this electoral process to finality.

This delay in credibly concluding the electoral process is now even more alarming as the entire world seeks to contend with the disruptive and devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) on economic, social and political life.

The RoPA is unambiguous and specific on the technical modalities by which a general final count is bound and we strongly urge the leadership of GECOM not to depart from these legal stipulations.

The Commonwealth Observer Group commends the people of Guyana for peacefully exercising their right to vote for the Government of their choice on 2 March.

This is a sacred constitutional and universal human right. The rights of the Guyanese people will be respected when a general final count is credibly administered in accordance with the law and given full effect.

Statement of the OAS Electoral Observation Mission to the March 2 General and Regional Elections in Guyana

April 15, 2020

The Chief of the Electoral Observation Mission of the Organization of American States (OAS) to the March 2 General and Regional Elections in Guyana, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, Bruce Golding, remains concerned that, after more than six weeks, an accurate and credible result that would allow a duly elected government to assume office has not been determined. This is especially regrettable in light of the global health crisis that requires every government to take decisive actions and to be able to command the confidence of its people in order to mobilize them in thwarting the spread of the Coronavirus.

The political crisis in Guyana is not intractable. As the Mission had previously noted – and to the credit of all the stakeholders, especially the voters themselves – the casting and counting of ballots on March 2 was conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner. All that remained was for the count from each polling station to be accurately tabulated and declared. There is an abundance of evidence that this was not done in the case of Region 4 and this has led to the decision for the ballots in all ten regions to be recounted.

The proposal by the Chief Elections Officer that would have required five months to recount less than 500,000 ballots is unheard of in any democracy and would be unacceptable under any circumstances. The Mission notes that the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) has ordered that a revised timetable be prepared.

The Mission urges GECOM to ensure that the procedures for the recount are transparent and consistent, that the instructions to election officials conducting the recount are unambiguous and based on the provisions of the relevant laws and that the public be fully informed of the methodology to be used.

In particular, the Mission requests GECOM take particular care to ensure that:

- The officials to be engaged in the recount are selected based on their impartiality and those who have displayed partisan behavior are excluded;
- The duly authorized representatives of political parties and accredited observers are allowed to see (but not handle) each ballot;
- The legal provisions for challenging the determination of ballots are fully respected;
- An ascertainment is made as to whether the number of ballots cast corresponds with the number of persons recorded as having voted;
- The result of the recount for each polling station is compared with the Statement of Poll signed by the Presiding Officer.

The Mission remains engaged to assist the people of Guyana in ensuring that their will prevails and that Guyana's position as an internationally respected democracy is restored and preserved.

U.S. Department of State: Secretary Michael R. Pompeo Remarks to the Press
April 7, 2020

"I'd also like to commend Guyana's High Court for clearing the way for a nationwide recount of that country's recent national elections as well. We look forward to working with their elections commission and the international observer community to ensure that that process is free and fair, transparent, and credible."

Official Tweets



Michael G. Kozak ✓ @WHAAsstSecty · 19h

It has been 6 weeks since elections were held in [#Guyana](#) with no result. The U.S. stands with [@OAS_official](#) in urging GECOM to conduct a recount as soon as possible.

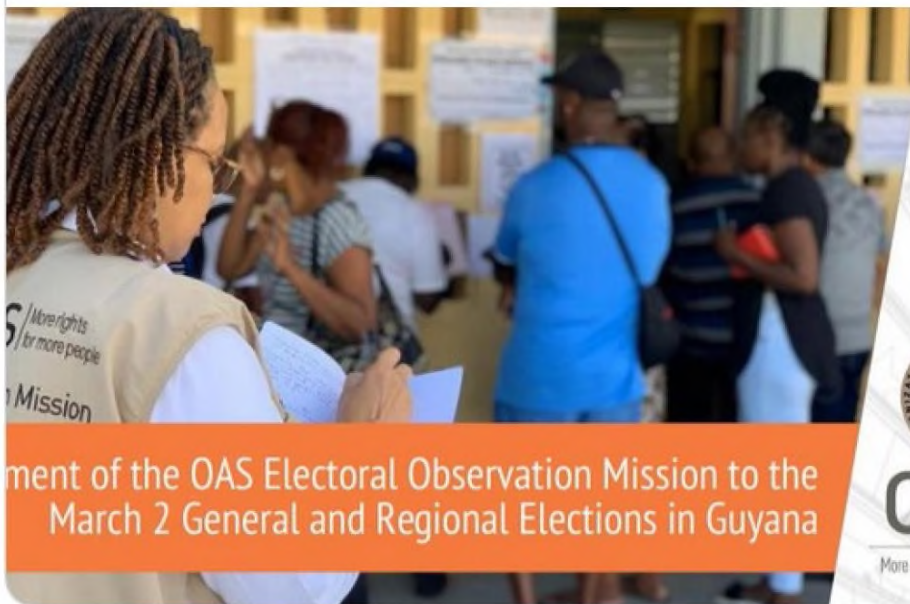
Guyanese citizens need a government elected based on a credible count of their votes now more than ever.



OAS ✓ @OAS_official · 23h

Statement of the Electoral Observation Mission of the [#OASinGuyana](#) to the March 2 General and Regional Elections in Guyana. [#GuyanaElections](#)

bit.ly/2XCYN7h



OAS

More rights for more people

💬 31

↻ 54

❤️ 90



Bar Council calls for GECOM to expedite process for accurate, transparent poll results

By *Stabroek News* On April 17, 2020 @ 2:05 am In Guyana News |



Declaring that “time is of the essence,” and that “the constitutional clock is ticking,” the Bar Council of the Guyana Bar Association (GBA) has issued a call for the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) to expeditiously enable an accurate and transparent declaration of results from the March 2nd elections.

Describing the Commission’s attitude to the current electoral impasse as “laissez faire” and “disgraceful and inexcusable” the Council yesterday noted that Article 69 of the Constitution mandates that on dissolution, the next session of Parliament must commence no later than four months from the end of the preceding session.

With the last session of Parliament being dissolved on December 30th last year, the Council has noted that the next session of Parliament must therefore begin in another 13 days—no later than April 30th.

In a press statement yesterday, the Bar Council said effect can only be given to the constitutional provisions by the constitutionally mandated timeline if GECOM and its Secretariat act immediately in a manner which demonstrates transparency, impartiality and fairness.

Reminding that the Constitution is the supreme law to which all persons and bodies are subject, and that “time is of the essence,” the Council said that timelines laid down by the constitution are not merely matters of principle which one can simply choose to abide by or ignore.

As a matter of fact, it is contending that the failure to abide by the constitution has far reaching consequences, both nationally and internationally for good governance and the rule of law, among other things.

Observing that it is close to one year now since the last sitting of Parliament on May 23rd, 2019 prior to the dissolution of Parliament on December 30th, 2019, the Council said that such a record is not one for which any country would wish to be known.

Reminding that Guyana is a parliamentary democracy based on the rule of law, the Council opined that the absence of parliamentary oversight of those who purport to exercise executive powers, whether de facto or de jure, is of grave concern "as it places the rule of law under siege."

The Council expressed concern at what it says appears to be a "laissez faire" approach taken by GECOM and its Secretariat. The absence of a declared election result some six weeks after the general and regional elections, in addition to being outside of the statutory prescribed period, is "disgraceful and inexcusable," it argued.

Noting that legal challenges connected to the elections controversy had been dealt with dispatch as counsel for all parties adhered to timelines and both the High and Appeal Courts sat on Sundays to ensure the timely determination of the matters, the Council said that despite the reported decision of GECOM over a week ago to effect a recount of the votes cast in all ten districts, that process is yet to begin as it continues to grapple with mundane decisions "while precious time continues to be lost."

The Council said that the integrity of any system is as good as the integrity of the persons who operate the system.

According to the Bar Council, "the recent open disregard for truth and decency by certain members of the GECOM Secretariat leaves a feeling of great distaste in the mouths of ordinary Guyanese who have been subjected to scorn, disdain and ridicule by the rest of the world even as we struggle to come to terms with the COVID-19 disaster." It added that "more will be said later about the continued relevance or function of GECOM when this chaos is over."

'Constitutional abyss'

The Council said a mere 14 days are left before Guyana delves further into what it described as "the constitutional abyss," to which it said the country was pushed by GECOM when it failed to hold general and regional elections within the constitutionally mandated period on the valid passing of a motion of No-Confidence on December 21st, 2018 against the APNU+AFC government.

The Bar Council is urging GECOM and its Secretariat to put aside the imbroglio of the last six weeks by ending the impasse over results with a declaration that permits the Constitution to be

honoured and provides the people of Guyana with a freely and fairly elected Government.

About two weeks ago, GECOM voted to recount all votes cast in the elections beginning chronologically with Electoral District One. Guyana has 10 Electoral Districts. The Commission is yet to bring finality to the modalities to facilitate the recount.

As of yesterday, however, Opposition-nominated Commissioner Sase Gunraj told the media that the Commission's Chairperson, retired Justice Claudette Singh is expected today to communicate the Commission's

decision on the way forward with the recount.

Late last week Wednesday, Chief Election Officer (CEO) of the Commission, Keith Lowenfield had announced a proposal for the recount process to take 156 days—some five months. This proposal was strongly rejected by opposition commissioners, while the Secretariat has defended the plan.

Senior Counsel Ralph Ramkarran, who is the Presidential Candidate of A New and United Guyana (ANUG), one of the parties which contested the March 2nd polls has, however, dismissed Lowenfield's proposition as being "absurd."

Ramkarran, in his weekly Conversation Tree column that was republished by this newspaper on Sunday, said that "the daring absurdity of the 156-day plan for the recounting of the ballots of the March 2 elections begs the question of what exactly goes on at meetings of the Elections Commission."

Ramkarran said it was deeply baffling that the Commissioner who made the proposal would not have been told that his proposal would result in a counting time of 156 days. He said that it is a mystery why the Chair of the Commission was not consulted with what he said was "the preposterous consequences" of the proposal before a formal meeting.

The Senior Counsel said that the CEO has official post-election functions relating to the selection of Members of Parliament and would be aware of article 69(1) of the Constitution, which provides that Parliament must meet within four months after its dissolution.

The attorney said it is not known whether this fact was within Lowenfield's contemplation when he worked up his 156-day plan, nor is it known either, that if it was as it should have been, that the CEO reported it to the Chair and/or the Commission, officially or unofficially.

Both President David Granger and Opposition Leader Bharrat Jagdeo had agreed to a full recount and following a request to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley had put together what she described as an independent high-level CARICOM team, which traveled to Guyana to supervise the recount. This was, however, aborted after a government candidate challenged the recount.

Article printed from Stabroek News: **<https://www.stabroeknews.com>**

URL to article: **<https://www.stabroeknews.com/2020/04/17/news/guyana/bar-council-calls-for-gecom-to-expedite-process-for-accurate-transparent-poll-results/>**

© 1985 - 2019 Stabroek News. All rights reserved.

Senior US official backs OAS call for rapid end to elections process

By *Stabroek News* On April 16, 2020 @ 2:16 am In Guyana News |



Michael G Kozak

In his latest call for democracy to be upheld here, Acting Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs Michael G Kozak yesterday backed a call by the Organisation of American States (OAS) for a swift recount of ballots to be done here for the final declaration of results (see other story on page 11.)

In a tweet, Kozak noted that it has been six weeks since the elections with no result. He said that the United States stands with the OAS in calling on the Guyana Elections Commission to conduct a recount as soon as possible.

"Guyanese citizens need a government elected based on a credible count of their votes now more than ever", he declared.

On March 26, Kozak summoned Guyana's Ambassador to the US Riyad Insanally to warn against the illegal installation of a government here.

On his Twitter feed, Kozak said: "I summoned #Guyana Ambassador to the U.S. Riyad Insanally to convey our firm position that any government sworn in based on flawed election results would not be legitimate. Every vote must be counted".

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Kozak and US Ambassador here Sarah-Ann Lynch have issued a stream of statements since March 2 urging a credible completion of the electoral process

and warning against the installation of an illegal government.

President David Granger has not uttered a word of concern that the District Four vote might have been rigged in his favour.

Article printed from Stabroek News: **<https://www.stabroeknews.com>**

URL to article: **<https://www.stabroeknews.com/2020/04/16/news/guyana/senior-us-official-backs-oas-call-for-rapid-end-to-elections-process/>**

© 1985 - 2019 Stabroek News. All rights reserved.

The situation in Nigeria is volatile and violent. Minority groups and those with dissenting views, are being victimized and persecuted with impunity, due to a complex mix of tribal, economic, political and religious views. In the past five years, there has been an increase in the numbers of attacks and killings; increased criminality and spreading insecurity, widespread failure by the federal authorities to investigate and hold perpetrators accountable, a lack of public trust and confidence in the judicial institutions and State institutions more generally.

There is a real issue with desertification in Africa. In September, 2019 the UN Special Rapporteur for Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions Agnes Callamard “urge{d} the Nigerian government and the international community to prioritize as a matter of urgency addressing the humanitarian crisis resulting from the {farmer-herdsman} conflict... and undertaking investigations of the attacks and the killings.

The Global Terrorism Index of the Institute for Economics & Peace has listed Nigeria #3 in the world impacted by terrorism. Half of those killed in Nigeria were due to the Fulani extremists. There has been 261% increases in killings in one year alone.

The 2018 Nigeria Human Rights Report found that impunity remained widespread at all levels of government and that ‘the government did not adequately investigate or prosecute most of the major outstanding allegations of human rights violations by the security forces or the majority of cases of policy or military extortion or other abuse of power.”

The Nigerian government has increasingly dismissed religious and human rights concerns. There are many documented incidences of violence led by state security actors, but no mechanisms by which to hold the Administration responsible. Buhari has stated that the government, under his rule, is not worried about international concerns regarding the rule of law and on December 12, 2019, a spokesman for the President claimed that concerns about human rights abuses in Nigeria are based on misconceptions and alleged that ‘only the Nigerian government knows the truth.” He stated that Nigeria “does not answer to the United States, the United Kingdom and European Union, in responding to government concerns regarding human rights abuses in Nigeria.” This is alarming as allies that receive US support and should be expected to adhere to their commitments under international law.

Some issues that the Committee and State Department may be interested in taking a deeper look into may include, but aren’t limited to:

What is President Buhari doing to address this instability, arbitrary killings, and general lawlessness in country?

DISSEMINATED BY MERCURY PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LLC, A REGISTERED FOREIGN AGENT, ON BEHALF OF NNAMDI KANU – LEADER OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF BIAFRA. MORE INFORMATION IS ON FILE WITH THE DEPT. OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, DC.

What steps has President Buhari taken to peacefully address the issues of desertification in Nigeria, and the concomitant influx of herders into agricultural areas of the middle belt?

What, if anything, has been done to hold members of the state security forces accused of participating in acts of violence and murder against Nigerian citizens accountable?

How many prosecutions have taken place against individuals accused of

What mechanisms are in place to root out government corruption?

What sort of reporting requirements are in place for the use of U.S. aid money directed to the Nigerian security forces?

An illegal gov't will attract withering sanctions

By *Stabroek News* On April 16, 2020 @ 2:04 am In Letters to the Editor |

Dear Editor,

Further to a Joint Statement by the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada and the European Union on Guyana's failure to deliver a credible General and Regional Elections result and the country's probable isolation, there are a variety of sanctions we can anticipate.

Here is a summary of possible economic impacts on the country:

Sanctions can come in the form of travel restrictions and asset freezes on persons in power, especially constitutional office holders, police, army officials, politicians and other citizens guilty of criminal behaviour and the violation of human rights such as electoral fraud etc.

In Guyana's case, the Region Four tabulation, verification and declaration process was ruled illegal by the Chief Justice on 11 March, 2020. The second declaration was also widely rejected as it did not follow the rules set out in law and the CJ's ruling.

All of the International Observers and Political Parties, except the governing party, pronounced that the process lacked transparency and was not credible.

If American sanctions target persons first, which is usually the case, the sanction is designed to effect a change in behaviour in the persons concerned to do the right thing and exercise the legal options available to them.

If the Coalition and GECOM fail to deliver a legitimate elections result, then personal sanctions are likely to follow. In the event that a swearing in occurs of an illegal President using the fraudulent declaration of Region Four, and a government is undemocratically installed against the will of the people, the following is likely to occur:

Sanctions will be placed on the President and his entire Cabinet, their families, and in some cases close associates.

Sanctions on members of the staff of the Guyana Elections Commission

who were fraudulently involved in elections rigging and malpractice.

All political appointees and their families

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 04/17/2020 4:25:16 PM

Members of the Guyana Police Force directly involved and complicit in enforcing the installation of an illegal government.

Members of the Army similarly involved in enforcing the installation of an illegal government.

Members of the Judiciary if illegal power is facilitated using the judiciary as a means.

All other politically affiliated persons contributing to or enabling the establishment of an illegal government.

While personal sanctions are imposed, Guyana under an illegal government, will become a pariah state, subject as a country to, but not limited to, expulsion from the international and regional community.

Such exclusion would lock out Guyana from accessing finance from international funding agencies such as the World Bank, IMF, CDB and IDB and other international banks. Needless to say that this would drastically retard development and severely damage, with all of its social ramifications, the way of life of the Guyanese people.

Sanctions will further manifest themselves by global banks being issued instructions from the US Treasury Department's enforcement arm, the Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) to bar financial transactions from being routed through the USA.

Other countries, such as Canada, UK and the EU member states will put similar arrangements in place to bar wire transfers of funds from being routed through their registered banks and jurisdiction (s) which they control.

The isolation of Guyana will result in a suffocation of businesses. Payments for imports will not be able to be completed, thereby, starving Guyana of essential materials for plant and machinery, branded goods, parts for manufacturers and retailers, trucks, cars, clothing and all other forms of imported goods we use and consume as citizens.

The trading of Guyana's gold on the world market can be frozen.

Faced with these sanctions and international isolation, Guyana will be forced to use up the little reserves we have at the Central Bank, which is approximately 2.5 months of import cover based on the reserve level at the Bank of Guyana. Thereafter Guyana will find itself bereft of the kind of resources levels to sustain the needs of businesses and their operations.

When this kind of shortage of goods and currency is imposed on an economy, it results in

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 04/17/2020 4:25:16 PM

unmanageable inflation escalating further and deeper into hyperinflation driving the poor to the
brink of mass starvation.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 04/17/2020 4:25:16 PM

The chain reaction then pushes mass migration out of Guyana, thereby weakening local demand and resulting in the ultimate destruction of the entire fabric of the Guyanese society.

There is no future scenario to contemplate where a positive can come about from undemocratic rule.

Yours faithfully,

Deodat Indar

Financial Expert

**Former President -Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry Former Vice
Chairman -Private Sector Commission of Guyana**

Article printed from Stabroek News: **<https://www.stabroeknews.com>**

URL to article: **<https://www.stabroeknews.com/2020/04/16/opinion/letters/an-illegal-govt-will-attract-withering-sanctions/>**

© 1985 - 2019 Stabroek News. All rights reserved.

Commonwealth observer mission ups pressure on GECOM to end 'unconscionable' delay

By *Stabroek News* On April 17, 2020 @ 2:07 am In Guyana News |



The Commonwealth observer group which was accredited to the March 2 General Elections yesterday urged that GECOM undertake the long-awaited recount of votes in full compliance with the Representation of the People Act and a credible manner.

The mission, which was headed by former Barbados Prime Minister Owen Arthur, cited the "unconscionable" delay in finalizing the result.

The statement issued by Arthur followed an equally hard-hitting one from the Organisation of American States (OAS) observer mission which was headed by former Jamaican Prime Minister Bruce Golding.

The statement issued by Arthur yesterday noted the 15th April 2020 statement of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) indicating that the Commission has decided to conduct a national recount of all ballots cast (Regions 1-10).

The statement said that it is expected that GECOM will ensure that a general final count is undertaken and concluded in strict accordance with the relevant provisions of the Guyana Representation of the People Act (RoPA).

"Further, it is imperative GECOM ensures that this is done in a credible, transparent and timely manner, bearing in mind that the people of Guyana have now waited an unconscionable 45 days to bring this electoral process to finality.

"This delay in credibly concluding the electoral process is now even more alarming as the entire

world seeks to contend with the disruptive and devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) on economic, social and political life”, Arthur’s statement declared.

Received by NSD/EARA Registration Unit 04/17/2020 4:25:16 PM

He added that the RoPA is “unambiguous and specific on the technical modalities by which a general final count is bound and we strongly urge the leadership of GECOM not to depart from these legal stipulations”.

GECOM Chair Claudette Singh is set to make a decision today on how the recount is to be done. A number of analysts have argued that officials of GECOM have mounted and are continuing a plot to rig the elections in favour of the incumbent APNU+AFC and that Singh has to take control of the process.

The Commonwealth Observer Group commended the people of Guyana for peacefully exercising their right to vote for the Government of their choice on 2 March.

“This is a sacred constitutional and universal human right. The rights of the Guyanese people will be respected when a general final count is credibly administered in accordance with the law and given full effect”, Arthur added.

What the Commonwealth says matters significantly as Guyana could face the risk of expulsion from the body for persistently offending the principles that underpin the grouping as set out in various instruments such as the Harare Declaration.

Earlier this month, on April 2nd, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) called on GECOM to fulfil its constitutional mandate for a credible tabulation of votes and warned that any government sworn-in here without a transparent process would lack legitimacy.

CMAG is the body to which persistent offenders of the Commonwealth’s shared principles are referred. Its taking up of Guyana’s case at its March 31 video conference meeting would be seen as a major embarrassment for the APNU+AFC government.

Referral to CMAG is also a preliminary step to the ultimate sanction that Guyana could be faced with – expulsion from the Commonwealth.

CMAG took up Guyana’s case even though it had not been on the agenda – a sign of the ratcheting up of international pressure for the GECOM and the David Granger administration to ensure that ballots for the disputed March 2nd elections are recounted.

In their statement, CMAG – which significantly includes CARICOM members Belize and Barbados – noted that the constitution of Guyana clearly states that sovereignty belongs to the people of Guyana.

“In this regard, Ministers noted and welcomed the public undertaking of the Chairperson of the

Received by NSD/EARA Registration Unit 04/17/2020 4:25:16 PM

Guyana Elections Commission, Justice Claudette Singh (Ret'd), that the votes would be recounted. Ministers called upon the Guyana Elections Commission to immediately fulfil its constitutional mandate and ensure the sovereign right of the people of Guyana to duly elect their Government is respected through a transparent and credible counting and tabulation process", the statement said.

It also adverted to the flood of litigation in the courts surrounding Guyana's elections.

"Ministers noted that Guyana's judiciary continues to be seized with protracted litigation on issues of national importance. From the passing of the 21 December 2018 no confidence motion which triggered the constitutional requirement for a General Election; to the conduct of the Region 4 Returning Officer in the 2 March election; and the issue of a recount in Region 4. In this regard, Ministers reaffirmed the Commonwealth principle that an independent, effective and competent legal system is integral to upholding the rule of law, engendering public confidence and dispensing justice", the statement said.

It added: "Ministers strongly iterated that any Government which is sworn in without a credible and fully transparent vote count and tabulation process would lack legitimacy".

Ministers also encouraged the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Patricia Scotland to remain engaged with Guyana through her Good Offices and to keep CMAG informed of developments in the country.

The statement said that the Ministers agreed to keep Guyana on the formal agenda, and, where necessary, "to convene an extraordinary meeting to discuss the situation and explore appropriate options". This statement, observers said, was the clearest warning yet from the 54-member grouping of the dire consequences that Guyana could be faced with. "Ministers expressed grave concern that the credible and transparent counting and tabulation of every vote in Region 4 has been persistently frustrated, with a declaration by the Returning Officer having been ruled to be unlawful by the Acting Chief Justice.

"Ministers noted and commended CARICOM's efforts, at the invitation of President Granger and the agreement of the Leader of the Opposition, to support the transparent and credible counting of ballots under the authority of the Guyana Elections Commission. Ministers further noted with deep regret that the CARICOM High-Level Initiative in the interest of peace and the preservation of democratic values was halted. Ministers encouraged CARICOM to remain seized of the situation in Guyana and committed Commonwealth support to these endeavours", the statement said.

The meeting was chaired by Ambassador Raychelle Omamo SC, EGH, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Kenya and also included Ministers and Representatives of Australia, Ghana, Malaysia, Namibia and the United Kingdom

Article printed from Stabroek News: <https://www.stabroeknews.com>

URL to article:

<https://www.stabroeknews.com/2020/04/17/news/guyana/commonwealth-observer-mission-puts-pressure-on-gecom-to-end-unconscionable-delay/>

© 1985 - 2019 Stabroek News. All rights reserved.

Golding urges credible elections result to restore Guyana's standing as 'respected democracy'

By *Stabroek News* On April 16, 2020 @ 2:13 am In Guyana News |



Bruce Golding

The Head of the OAS observer mission at the March 2nd elections, Bruce Golding yesterday expressed concern that an accurate result has not been determined six weeks on and said this was crucial to restoring Guyana's position as an "internationally respected democracy".

Golding's reference to Guyana's democratic standing demonstrates how quickly the international community is drawing a judgement on the disputed elections and the perils that might lie ahead for the country.

In a press statement, Golding, a former Prime Minister of Jamaica, also called for care in the upcoming recount and the exclusion of any officials who have shown partiality. There have been calls for several officials to be excluded from the recount because of their questionable behaviour, particularly the District Four Returning Officer Clairmont Mingo.

Coming from a former CARICOM Leader and the Head of the Organisation of American States (OAS) observer mission here, Golding's statement will further intensify the pressure on GECOM and the incumbent, President David Granger to not stand in the way of the finalizing of the election result.

Golding, whose OAS observer NSD/FARA Registration Unit 04/17/2020 4:25:16 PM
for Region Four that had been produced by Mingo, also lambasted the timeframe that had been presented by Chief Election Officer Keith Lowenfield for a recount of the votes.

“The proposal by the Chief Election Officer that would have required five months to recount less than 500,000 ballots is unheard of in any democracy and would be unacceptable under any circumstances. The Mission notes that the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) has ordered that a revised timetable be prepared”, Golding declared.

Lowenfield has been soundly criticised for presenting what has been termed an absurd proposal and has cast blame on an opposition-nominated GECOM commissioner for setting narrow terms for the staffing of the process.

Declaring that the present electoral impasse was not insoluble, Golding, who served as Prime Minister between 2007 and 2011, said that the OAS mission is prepared to help to ensure that “Guyana’s position as an internationally respected democracy is restored and preserved”.

The OAS has already expressed interest in being present for the recount of votes.

Golding also raised concerns that the election result had not been finalized in the context of the current COVID-19 public health crisis.

The statement said that he “remains concerned that, after more than six weeks, an accurate and credible result that would allow a duly elected government to assume office has not been determined. This is especially regrettable in light of the global health crisis that requires every government to take decisive actions and to be able to command the confidence of its people in order to mobilize them in thwarting the spread of the Coronavirus”.

He added that the political crisis in Guyana is not intractable.

“As the Mission had previously noted – and to the credit of all the stakeholders, especially the voters themselves – the casting and counting of ballots on March 2 was conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner. All that remained was for the count from each polling station to be accurately tabulated and declared. There is an abundance of evidence that this was not done in the case of Region 4 and this has led to the decision for the ballots in all ten regions to be recounted”, he declared.

He called for transparent and consistent procedures for the recount and that the instructions to election officials conducting the process are unambiguous and based on the provisions of the relevant laws. Golding also urged that the public be fully informed of the methodology to be used.

In particular, the Mission urged GECOM to take care to ensure that:

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 04/17/2020 4:25:16 PM

- the officials to be engaged in the recount are selected based on their impartiality and those who have displayed partisan behaviour are excluded;
- the duly authorized representatives of political parties and accredited observers are allowed to see (but not handle) each ballot;
- the legal provisions for challenging the determination of ballots are fully respected;
- an ascertainment is made as to whether the number of ballots cast corresponds with the number of persons recorded as having voted;
- the result of the recount for each polling station is compared with the Statement of Poll signed by the Presiding Officer.

Article printed from Stabroek News: **<https://www.stabroeknews.com>**

URL to article: **<https://www.stabroeknews.com/2020/04/16/news/guyana/golding-urges-credible-elections-result-to-restore-guyanas-standing-as-respected-democracy/>**

© 1985 - 2019 Stabroek News. All rights reserved.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 04/17/2020 4:25:16 PM